



Alameda, Contra Costa, Fresno, Kern, Kings, Los Angeles, Madera, Mariposa, Merced, Sacramento, San Joaquin, Stanislaus, Tulare
Partners: Amtrak, Caltrans Division of Rail, BNSF Railway Company, Union Pacific Railroad

REPRESENTING COUNTIES ALONG THE SAN JOAQUIN RAIL CORRIDOR

SJVRC Meeting

Thursday, January 26, 2012

Atwater, CA - Castle Airport Conference Center

Call to Order by Chair John Pedrozo at 10:58 am.

Pledge of Allegiance

Welcoming Remarks by Chair Pedrozo was deferred to keep meeting on time.

Roll Call taken by Janice Mei Camacho of Caltrans Division of Rail, 15 members present, quorum established. Moderator Arthur Lloyd was unable to attend the meeting.

Public Comment on Non Agenda Items: None

Item 3A Approve Meeting Minutes from September 29, 2011 Meeting: Moved and Approved

Item 3B Consider Adoption of Resolution Promoting Rail Safety and Passenger Rail Ridership: Moved and Approved

Item 3C and 5A: Consider Adoption of Resolution of Supporting Gap Closure

GapTAC Report of members to close “the Gap” between Bakersfield and Los Angeles by rail. The Committee fully adopts the resolution. Member Angelo Lamas introduced and thanked members of the Committee for their hard work in getting a proposal and report done, which will be finalized by Division of Rail staff after the meeting. Member Stacey Mortensen stated that she has been working in partnership with people in the Sacramento to Merced area and would welcome any route that bridges the gap by rail and be attractive to the public at large as well as private business interests. Mike Barnbaum, a member of the public, provided comment that this is beneficial for all of California. Member Howard Abelson stated that since high-speed rail is reaching a critical decision making point, what effect would the going forward have on Member Mortensen’s efforts. Ms. Mortensen stated they have a parallel plan going forward. Member David Rogers stated that if things keep going the way they are in respect to the problems high-speed rail has been encountering, Amtrak service will be the way and wave of the future. It will be important to get the San Joaquin trains operating up to 110 mph with full grade separations on the current corridor. Member Hank Fung stated that Los Angeles County supports this Resolution because its language is broad enough to encompass both conventional and high-speed rail. Tom Dodson, member of the public, stated in the corridor environmental impact report, one

of the programmatic elements is to include closing the gap as part of the corridor. Member Robert Snoddy stated Kern County of Governments is looking at this incrementally and that if Metrolink keeps working its way towards Mojave, the gap will be closed faster than anything. Member Bruce Heard fully supports the incremental approach. Moved by Member Rogers, seconded by Member Heard. Motion was approved unanimously.

Nominations for Chair and Vice Chair for 2012–14: Member Lamas nominated Member Vito Chiesa as Chair and Member Rogers as Vice Chair; the motion was seconded by Member Abelson. Chair Pedrozo closed the nominations. Motion was approved unanimously.

Dick Whittington, Yosemite Area Regional Transportation System (YARTS), Transit General Manager, stated that Yosemite's visitation had topped 4 million people last year for the first time since 2006. Ridership on San Joaquin trains is up. Ridership on YARTS is up. Ridership on Amtrak Thruway Bus service on YARTS is down and been trending that way for the past 3-4 years. He stated some promotion is needed to get the thruway bus numbers back up. The amount of congestion is causing somewhat of a disruption of the quality of visit in the park. Yosemite National Park is working on an aggressive campaign to reduce the number of vehicles in the park while increasing the amount of visitors, primarily using alternative transportation. Park officials would like the public to become part of the solution instead of part of the problem. The park also would like to see Amtrak and Caltrans step up their marketing efforts as a viable alternative transportation solution through using the thruway buses to bring mass amounts of people into the park without vehicles.

Amtrak Government Affairs, Alex Khalfin: A memo was passed out that stating Amtrak funding for FY 2012 is \$1.48 billion, representing the lowest amount of funding since FY 2008. This is the second year in a row that has had seen lowered funding. Mr. Khalfin briefly talked about the separation program that was voluntary for non-union employees. Even though there has been a loss of senior-level management, Amtrak is still committed to providing excellent customer service.

Amtrak Operations, Anthony Chapa: Mr. Chapa passed out the latest CSI scores. The goal for the year is 92% satisfaction, currently the year-to-date is at 89%. He also stated that ridership records have been set for 15-consecutive months, which leads the nation for all Amtrak routes. Mr. Chapa stated this would not have been possible if it hadn't been for the dedicated and hard-working staff at Caltrans' Division of Rail. He also talked about the upgrade and consistency of signage at all stations. The last point Mr. Chapa made was that Thanksgiving week ridership was up 4.8% over 2010's numbers.

Caltrans Division of Rail, William D. Bronte: Mr. Bronte gave an update on the Governor's proposed budget. He stated that the proposed budget will eliminate 15 of the 19 positions that are dedicated towards Amtrak operations within Caltrans' Division of Rail. He wanted the Board to be aware that because of the dedication and hard work of the staff in the success of the record growth of the San Joaquin corridor that this could be in real jeopardy unless the budget proposals are changed. He reiterated to members that if they don't want to see the service deteriorate, they have the option of lobbying on behalf of the Division of Rail.

Mr. Bronte also stated that the State Rail Plan is moving forward on working on funding for high-speed rail and commuter rail, in addition to conventional rail services in California. The Division of Rail has also done all the modeling for the BNSF for increasing service to 90 mph along the San Joaquin corridor. Efforts, such as staff doing forecast modeling, are a critical feature that could go away under the Governor's current budget proposal.

BNSF Update, Rick Depler: The operation in 2011 came in at 90% on-time performance. The BNSF standard contract is 95%. The year-to-date is currently at 96%. Mr. Depler had no further comments for the Board.

Amtrak Bus Operations, Andrew Felden: Mr. Felden provided quick highlights on the thruway side, announced that Coach America again won the contracts again for all the current routes in Southern California that they previously possessed. He also mentioned that the new amenities onboard the buses are starting to come in with these new contracts (WiFi, electrical outlets at every seat, tray tables, etc.).

Alan Miller from Caltrans Division of Rail, Office of Planning and Policy gave an update for the Pacific Surfliner schedule change that occurred on January 9, 2011. He stated that the new schedule showed better connectivity to the thruway schedules from the Pacific Surfliner to the San Joaquin.

Member Snoddy gave an update on Kern Regional/Commuter service that will hopefully grow into a rail service, mostly from Delano and Arvin to Bakersfield.

Member Mortensen would like to have a discussion, at the next scheduled meeting, about the possibility of a joint powers authority for the San Joaquin corridor; similar to what LOSSAN is doing down south in relation to the budget situation for Caltrans Division of Rail.